



# INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

**WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT  
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*For information*

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## PLENARY MEETING

### Malta

#### TRAINING FOR COMPETENCE

##### **Recognition of future challenges**

Conscious of a future full of challenges and unknowns, Malta has adopted the following slogan:

**"Training for competence is the key factor for future success"**

##### **Changing organizational parameters**

Telemalta Corporation which was the State owned public operator has now been succeeded by Maltacom plc. Originally, Telemalta Corporation was the catalyst in providing telecommunications development for the Maltese Islands. It has provided a universal basic telephone service, which has now reached a penetration rate of approximately 50%, through its fully digitized switching system, its nation-wide optic fibre transmission network and its widespread duct system.

High-speed data transmission is provided almost anywhere in Malta with ease. New projects which include HDSL, ISDN and ATM will bring to Malta the latest technological advances.

In the future, Maltacom shall place more emphasis on value and variety in its service provisioning. This requires the acquisition of internal competence and eventually excellence as a standard.

Following the transfer of the whole business of Telemalta Corporation to Maltacom plc, in accordance with the Telecommunications (Regulation) Act, 1997, the Government of Malta has also announced its intention to sell 40% of its shareholding in Maltacom later on this year to local and foreign investors - a challenge which has brought along a dire and urgent need for other major changes, not least in its internal organization.

Technological advances, consumer demands and the globalization of the telecommunications industry no longer permit telecommunications to be considered as a "utility" provided by an administrative arm of the Government. Telecommunication provides an essential "lever" for other key productive sectors of the economy such as finance and tourism. International trade must be managed in such a way as to optimize benefits therefrom.

Through the Telecommunications (Regulation) Act, 1997, Malta has recognized the regulatory function must be segregated from the operational function. Unlike Telemalta Corporation, Maltacom enjoys no regulatory function, such a role is vested in the newly appointed Telecommunications Regulator. The new legislation has also paved the way towards liberalization and competition. In the local scenario, AD 2010 has been set as the year in which full liberalization in the telecommunications industry shall be achieved.

### **Foundations of a training culture**

Malta is trying to move away from a reactive training mentality to a more anticipative and proactive training culture.

In Malta, the training function has always been given its due importance. For example, in 1988 with the assistance of the ITU, an organization development workshop was organized in order to define policies, strategies and organizational objectives in particular in the area of human resource management, including manpower planning, recruitment and selection, reward management and training.

One very important principle advocated to all our Malta's counterparts is the direct commitment shown by decision-makers towards the training function. Malta recognizes that ignorance breeds suspicion and stagnation, whilst knowledge leads to creativity and initiative.

Malta has also recognized that it must associate itself with other States to adopt a policy ensuring that training is provided to the largest number of dependants at the most economic cost.

In fact, to sustain productivity growth, during the financial year 1996/97, a total number of 45 000 man hours of training were delivered to a large number of Maltacom employees, an average of around 25 hours per head. Two thirds of this training was devoted to the development of managerial skills with the other one third related to technical skills.

### **Human resource development**

In line with Malta's policy for human resource development several initiatives were taken by Maltacom:

- a comprehensive human resource plan has been developed in line with the business and operational plans of the organization;
- new functional departments were set up in order to meet the goals and targets as specified in the business plan.

### **Introducing a three-year training programme**

A three-year training programme has been prepared by Maltacom. This programme aims to integrate the training function with the human resource strategy.

The programme is divided in three parts:

- 1) personal development skills;
- 2) specialized skills development;
- 3) the provision of additional skills to all employees within the organization including health and safety, first aid, life skills and IT development.

### **Malta looks ahead to establishing a regional telecommunication training centre**

The dire need of upgrading Malta's training facilities in the field of telecommunications has long been felt.

In particular, Maltacom has embarked on an ambitious project to set up a new and modern telecommunication training college that will with the purpose of launching Malta as a centre of excellence in telecommunications and information technology.

The college is expected to have:

- all study plans organized in modular form;
- a standing module review and updating system, with an efficient and effective teaching material design and updating unit;
- instructors who are trained in traditional teaching techniques and in tutoring skills using computer-based training and other products;
- a system of course delivery in suitably equipped classrooms with the necessary audiovisual supports and adequately equipped laboratories for undertaking of practical work to meet the requirements of study programmes.

On a national level this telecommunication training college will be providing services to:

- Maltacom employees who will be trained and updated on modern technology and facilities;
- local telecommunications-related sectors, such as mobile telephony providers, paging providers, Internet service providers, National Regulator, the University of Malta and Technical Institutes and various other user-groups;
- the Maltese citizens who will receive a better service all round.

On an international level, the beneficiaries may also be fellows coming from other international operator organizations through the activation of cooperation agreements in training. The advice of the ITU's BDT to seek a networking approach of collaboration in training with Malta's neighbouring regional counterparts is taken into account. Over the years Malta has been, and will continue collaborating through this college with international organizations such as the ITU and CTO in the field of training.

Even whilst the architects are preparing the necessary drawings of the training complex, Maltacom has wasted no time in undertaking a number of initiatives in this sense. For example, during the WTDC, 14 international visitors participated in a four-week course for leading to a Certificate in Telecommunications Management following collaboration between Cable & Wireless College and Maltacom. Once our college is fully functional it will also host Cable & Wireless College Telecommunications Technician Course Part 1 for international students. A number of Maltacom's in-house lecturers have already obtained the necessary trainers certificate in Coventry for this purpose.

The telecommunication training college will be administered at arms length by a newly incorporated limited liability company.

### **Assistance from ITU**

From the start, it was recognized that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), with its vast experience in similar projects around the world was the best source of assistance, support and expertise in the setting up of the telecommunication training college in Malta. Therefore, following the visit by an ITU expert, a project document was produced giving a detailed evaluation of the project and listing amongst other things the activities and inputs that were required for the realization of the project.

A Technical Cooperation Administrative Agreement was signed between Malta and ITU with a view to acquire technical assistance facilitating the participation of the college in the Global Telecommunication University and Global Telecommunication Training Institute projects. The College is in fact expected to participate in these projects by hosting ITU's Virtual Training Centre. The assistance will relate to the computerization of activities and enables the design and production of technology-based training and/or traditional training materials with computers and specialized software.

### **Project management**

To determine the feasibility of the project, a business plan was formulated which amongst other things took into account the local and international training demand, costs, pricing and sensitivity analysis.

At the outset, the project had the full commitment and support of the Maltese Telecommunications Authorities and Maltacom's top management.

A Training Committee with the responsibility to design the college's curriculum and a Marketing and International Relations Committee has been set up. The latter has the task of following up on a number of local and international contacts with a view to developing them into bilateral cooperation agreements relating specifically to training

### **The way forward**

The telecommunication industry is dynamic and constantly changing. The Buenos Aires Declaration emphasized human resource development:

"No telecommunication network can be designed, installed and operated efficiently without appropriately skilled staff at all levels. Human Resource Development and Management require innovative approaches to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing telecommunication environment."

Today Malta and, indeed, Maltacom are ready for an exciting but relatively unknown future. Human resources remain Malta's most valuable asset. Training for competence is the key to success.

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